

WO-135
Robert Pitts House
Berlin
Private

c. 1830

The Robert Pitts house is the best preserved of the stepped or telescope dwellings in the town of Berlin. The four-part frame house, located on Vine Street, was erected in one building period around 1830. Several construction features, the consistent late Federal style woodwork, and the floor plan indicate a single building program. Distinctive to this house is a narrow transverse hall in the middle section that joins the main house with the colonnade thereby provides privacy to the two small rooms behind the hall. This plan formula solved the often encountered problem with stepped houses where rooms were arranged in a linear fashion without private passages. This house is one of the most significant of the stepped dwellings in northern Worcester County.

Credit for its construction is awarded to Robert Pitts, who bought a 13-acre parcel in January 1830 from John R. Pitts for \$40. Robert Pitts was evidently in a business partnership with a John Hudson, trading as Pitts and Hudson, for the pair are recorded on a mortgage of this property in May 1844. A default on the mortgage forced the auction of the house and lot of Robert Pitts, which was sold the next year to John Fassitt, Sr. In an effort to clear any title to the property Robert Pitts and Eliza J. Pitts, after having moved to Richmond, Virginia, sold Eliza's dower rights to the land to Anna Fassitt, widow of John Fassitt. Although Albert J. Fassitt acquired title to the property in 1850 he lived on the Fassitt farm on Sinepuxent Neck and evidently rented this house. The town property was bequeathed to John T. Carey by Albert J. Fassitt in his will of 1878, and the property remained in Carey family hands through balance of the

Page 2

twentieth century. In April of 1906 John Franklin Hammond bought the house and about 8 acres from the Carey heirs for \$1700. Hammond family interest in the Vine Street house was not sold until 1978.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: ROBERT PITTS HOUSE

MHT Inventory Number: W0-135

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

- 1) Historic Period Theme(s): ARCHITECTURE
- 2) Geographic Orientation: EASTERN SHORE
- 3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):
AGRICULTURAL/INDUSTRIAL
TRANSITION 1815-1870
- 4) Resource Type(s):
SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WO-135

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic ROBERT PITTS HOUSE

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 7 Vine Street ☐ not for publication

city, town Berlin ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Worcester

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Daniel Jones

street & number 7 Vine Street telephone no.:

city, town Berlin state and zip code MD 21811

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber 1389

street & number Worcester County Clerk of Court folio 497

city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. W0-135

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Robert Pitts house, also known as the Albert J. Fassitt house, stands at 7 Vine Street in the center of Berlin, Worcester County, Maryland. The two-story, four-part stepped frame house faces south with the gable roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built around 1830, this two-story, four-part dwelling is supported on a low brick foundation, and the house is sheathed with a layer of asbestos shingles. Covering each section is a steeply pitched asphalt shingle roof. The four-section dwelling follows the regional stepped format with a large two-story side hall/parlor main house, a story-and-a-half wing, a single story colonnade and a single-story kitchen. Upon inspection it is clear the four sections were built in one building program.

The south (main) elevation of the main house is an asymmetrical two-bay elevation with a side entrance squeezed in the east end of the structure between the corner and an adjacent nine-over-six sash window. The entrance has been reworked with a new door and rebuilt transom. The two adjacent nine-over-six sash windows, however are original. Lighting the second floor are two six-over-six sash windows. Stretching across the base of the roof is a boxed cornice with bed and crown moldings.

The west gable end of the main house is symmetrically arranged with pairs of windows flanking the interior end brick stack. The chimney is finished with a corbelled cap. Lighting the first floor are nine-over-six sash while the second floor is illuminated by six-over-six sash windows. The attic is pierced by small four-pane windows, and a molded bargeboard finishes the flush gable end.

The east end of the main house is partially covered by the story-and-a-half, three-bay middle section. A small window pierces the upper gable end of the main house. The west (main) facade of the middle section is marked by a center board door and flanking six-over-six sash windows. Marking the roof is a pair of six-over-six sash gabled dormers trimmed with paneled pilasters. An interior end brick stack rises through the east gable end of this section.

The third and shortest section is a two-bay colonnade with a pair of six-over-six sash windows lighting the single room. A simple cornice trims the base of the colonnade roof.

The fourth and final section is a single-story two-bay kitchen with a board door and flanking six-over-six sash window defining the south (main) facade. A boxed cornice with bed and crown moldings as well as decorative end boards highlights the base of the roof. A single-flue chimney rises through the east gable end.

(continued)

8. Significance

Survey No. WO-135

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Robert Pitts house is the best preserved of the stepped or telescope dwellings in the town of Berlin. The four-part frame house, located on Vine Street, was erected in one building period around 1830. Several construction features, the consistent late Federal style woodwork, and the floor plan indicate a single building program. Distinctive to this house is a narrow transverse hall in the middle section that joins the main house with the colonnade thereby provides privacy to the two small rooms behind the hall. This plan formula solved the often encountered problem with stepped houses where rooms were arranged in a linear fashion without private passages. This house is one of the most significant of the stepped dwellings in northern Worcester County.

Credit for its construction is awarded to Robert Pitts, who bought a 13-acre parcel in January 1830 from John R. Pitts for \$40.(AV/531) Robert Pitts was evidently in a business partnership with a John Hudson, trading as Pitts and Hudson, for the pair are recorded on a mortgage of this property in May 1844.(GMH 7/369) A default on the mortgage forced the auction of the house and lot of Robert Pitts, which was sold the next year to John Fassitt, Sr.(GMH 8/42) In an effort to clear any title to the property Robert Pitts and Eliza J. Pitts, after having moved to Richmond, Virginia, sold Eliza's dower rights to the land to Anna Fassitt, widow of John Fassitt.(GMH 9/469) Although Albert J. Fassitt acquired title to the property in 1850 he lived on the Fassitt farm on Sinepuxent Neck and evidently rented this house. The town property was bequeathed to John T. Carey by Albert J. Fassitt in his will of 1878 (GTB 3/101), and the property remained in Carey family hands through balance of the twentieth century. In April of 1906 John Franklin Hammond bought the house and about 8 acres from the Carey heirs for \$1700.(FHP 24/522) Hammond family interest in the Vine Street house was not sold until 1978.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. WO-135

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian

organization Private consultant/Worcester Co. date 7/18/90

street & number P. O. Box 5 telephone 301-651-1094

city or town Westover state Md 21871

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

Robert R. Pitts house description (continued)

The interiors of the house have been recently remodeled during the last three years but much of the original early nineteenth century woodwork remains in place. The first floor parlor retains a finely crafted period mantel with paired colonettes supporting a fluted block frieze and a stepped and broken shelf. On the opposite wall a small five-panel door with an early latch opens into the space under the stair. The adjacent stair hall, on the other hand, has been remodeled with the reworking of the walls and floor. The stair, which fills the most of the space, has not been altered.

The second floor of the two-story section has early nineteenth century finishes as well. A period mantel survives in the bedroom, and an enclosed stair rises to the finished attic.

Original woodwork survives in the story-and-a-half middle section as well. A revealing aspect of the middle section is its plan which contains a transverse hall that fronts two small rooms. This hall provides access from the main house to the colonnade and service wing while providing private access to the two rooms behind. The presence of this hall solves a problem often inherent in stepped house plans where each room opens into the next without the privacy of a separate connecting hall. Another indication of the one-period construction is that the chimney to the middle section serves a small first floor bedroom as well as a fireplace in the adjacent colonnade. The second floor of the middle section is divided by a beaded board partition, and beaded board doors provide access between rooms. Riven lath is exposed in the eastern room which has not been remodeled.

The colonnade or dining room is fitted with a plain 1830s post and lintel mantel with a built-in cupboard to the north.

Finishing the kitchen are mostly modern materials, however an early nineteenth century winder stair remains in the southwest corner. Beaded board doors provide access to the stair as well as the small storage space below. The walls are partially covered with narrow beaded board wainscoting. Above the kitchen, the second floor is an unfinished space.

WO-135
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE
Chain of title

1389/497 John W. Liiamaa
 Greta Lisa Liiamaa

to

11/16/1987 Henry Berne & Leah Berne et. ux.
1. 5.85 acres \$105,000.
North side of Vine Street, "Plat of
Survey--lands formerly owned by John
Harner" Delmarva Surveys, Inc. Except
3788 square feet conveyed to Charles E.
Parker, et. ux. 11/22/1985, W.C.L. 1137/351
2. Small three cornered parcel North side
BC & A Railroad right-of-way conveyed John
A. Harner and Jean Y. Matthews 8/14/1978
from Mary Boston Hammond, Laura Ruth Hammond
Young, and Mary Catherine Hammond Harner
F.W.H. 640/22, see confirmatory deed 1389/494,
10/26/1987

W.C.L. 1042/310 John A. Harner & Jean Y. Matthews

to

11/16/1984 John W. Liimaa & Greta Lisa Liimaa et. ux.
Plat book W.C.L. 95/38 5.85 acres

F.W.H. 640/221 Mary Boston Hammond, Laura Ruth Hammond
Young, and Mary Catherine Hammond Harner

to

8/14/1978 John Albert Harner & Jean Y. Matthews
Part of a tract called Mt. Pleasant

WO-135
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE
Chain of title

Page 2

F.H.P. 24/522

John T. Carey, Sallie E. Carey et. ux.
and Joshua E. Carey and Elizabeth M.
Carey et. ux. (Joshua E. Carey and wife
joins in this deed to convey any dower
Joshua may have in said land)

to

4/3/1906

John Franklin Hammond
\$1700 Part of Tract called Mt. Pleasant

F.H.P. 10/197

Edward James Carey, Albert Charles
Carey, Ethan Allen Carey (any claim
of Mother Julia A. Carey)

to

12/10/1896

John Thomas Carey
(John T. Carey sold off small part of lot
left him by Albert J. Fassitt to William
J. Massey) Estimated 8 acres at present
occupied by Thomas Hudson

Will Book
G.T.B. 3/101

Last will and testament of Albert J. Fassitt

to

11/23/1878

John T. Carey

G.H.R. 1/54

Albert J. Fassitt

to

12/5/1863

Julia A. Fassitt
(Julia afterwards intermarried with
Joshua E. Carey)

\$1800. House and lot where James
Brittingham lives formerly owned by
Robert Pitts

WO-135
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE
Chain of title

Page 3

E.D.M. 3/301

William & Catherine Elizabeth Fassitt,
Quit claim any interest of Captain John
Fassitt property

to

7/27/1850

Albert J. Fassitt

\$275 House and lot called Mount Pleasant
situate lying and being in the town
of Berlin

G.M.H. 9/469

Robert Pitts & Eliza J. Pitts his wife
of the City of Richmond

to

2/25/1847

Anna Fassitt (widow of John Fassitt)
\$100 Dower Interest not conveyed
House & lot called Mount Pleasant
12 or 13 acres of land

G.M.H. 8/42

John C. Derickson & Cyrus L. Williams
Trustees

to

1/1/1845

John Fassitt, Sr.

G.M.H. 7/369

Robert Pitts & John Hudson, trading
as Pitts and Hudson

to

5/29/1844

John C. Derickson & Cyrus L. Williams
In trust for sale to apply to creditors
House and lot where Robert Pitts resides
(Sale Saturday 7/6/1844 Public auction
to John Fassitt for \$1002

WO-135
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE
Chain of title

Page 4

AV/531-534

John R. Pitts

to

1/26/1830

Robert Pitts
\$40, 13 acres

AV/284

John C. Derrickson

to

10/31/1829

John R. Pitts
\$225 Lot 4 except 1 acre sold to John
J. Williams, part of MT. Pleasant

AV/264

James and John Mumford
(Heirs of William Stevenson and Tabitha
Collins)

to

10/17/1829

John C. Derrickson
\$600 Mount Pleasant, Little Worth &
Pinders Neglect

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. WO-135

Magi No. 2401355404

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Telescope House*

and/or common Liiamaa House

2. Location

street & number 7 Vine Street

☐ not for publication

city, town Berlin

☐ vicinity of

congressional district 1st

state Maryland

county

Worcester

3. Classification

Category☐ district☒ building(s)☐ structure☐ site☐ object**Ownership**☐ public☒ private☐ both**Public Acquisition**☐ in process☐ being considered☒ not applicable**Status**☒ occupied☐ unoccupied☐ work in progress**Accessible**☒ yes: restricted☐ yes: unrestricted☐ no**Present Use**☐ agriculture☐ commercial☐ educational☐ entertainment☐ government☐ industrial☐ military☐ museum☐ park☒ private residence☐ religious☐ scientific☐ transportation☐ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name John and Lisa Liiamaa

street & number 7 Vine Street

telephone no.: 641-3723

city, town Berlin

state and zip code MD 21811

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Courthouse

liber

street & number Market Street

folio

city, town Snow Hill

state

MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. WO-135

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Liiamaa house is a four section wood frame "telescope" style structure, whose length lies parallel and close to Vine Street. The largest segment of the house at the West end is $2\frac{1}{2}$ story, the next being $1\frac{1}{2}$ story with dormers, followed by a low-roofed, 1 story section and terminated by a $1\frac{1}{2}$ story section.

The largest section of the Liiamaa house is 2 x 2 bay with the entrance placed close to the junction with the next section and creating a assymmetrical 3rd bay. Windows are 6/6, with a pair of 2/2 windows in the gable end. The entrance features a 2 light transom with curved top and a 9 panel door. The interior of this section reveals a probable change in the position of the stairs so that they now rise directly in front of the entrance. The two rooms, upstairs and down, contain late Federal-style mantels and locks.

The $1\frac{1}{2}$ story section adjacent to the largest just discussed is 3 bays across the front. A ~~board and batten~~ ^{shiplap} door is centered between two 6/6 windows. A pair of 6/6 dormers with pilaster-like side detail are located over each of the first floor windows. A brick interior chimney is located in the east end of this section. On the interior a small room on the west end with chair rail (possibly location of stairs originally) and a five-panel door add to late Federal details.

The third section from the west end is two bays across, 6/6 windows and a low pitched gable roof with only crawl space. The interior is one large room with fireplace sharing chimney of section just mentioned. To the right is a double-doored cupboard with three panels in each door.

The final section on the east end of the house is $1\frac{1}{2}$ story, two bays. The left bay is a ~~board and batten~~ ^{shiplap} door and the right bay a 6/6 window. This end is two bays deep with interior brick chimney.

The two sections on the east end have a shed-roofed rear addition of modern origin. Most of the structure sits atop a very low brick foundation. The largest section was originally sheathed with weather-boarding while the remaining sections display wooden shingles beneath the ~~asphalt~~ ^{asbestos} shingles that now cover the entire structure.

8. Significance

Survey No. WO-135

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The liiamaa house is Berlin's best example of a simple Federal-style telescoping house. It's design and details are distinctly different from the better documented Federal houses of Berlin's Main Street and add a new dimension to what can be learned about Berlin in the first half of the 19th century. It should receive more detailed study.

Survey No. W0-135

Quadrant name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

[illegible]

B

Number of Species	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	2	2	2
2	2	2	2
3	2	2	2
4	2	2	2
5	2	2	2
6	2	2	2
7	2	2	2
8	2	2	2
9	2	2	2
10	2	2	2

c

D 

[illegible][illegible]

G gel incubated to hydrate the test extracts

[illegible]

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Page	Hammond
------------	------	---------

organization Berlin Historic District Commission date September, 1986

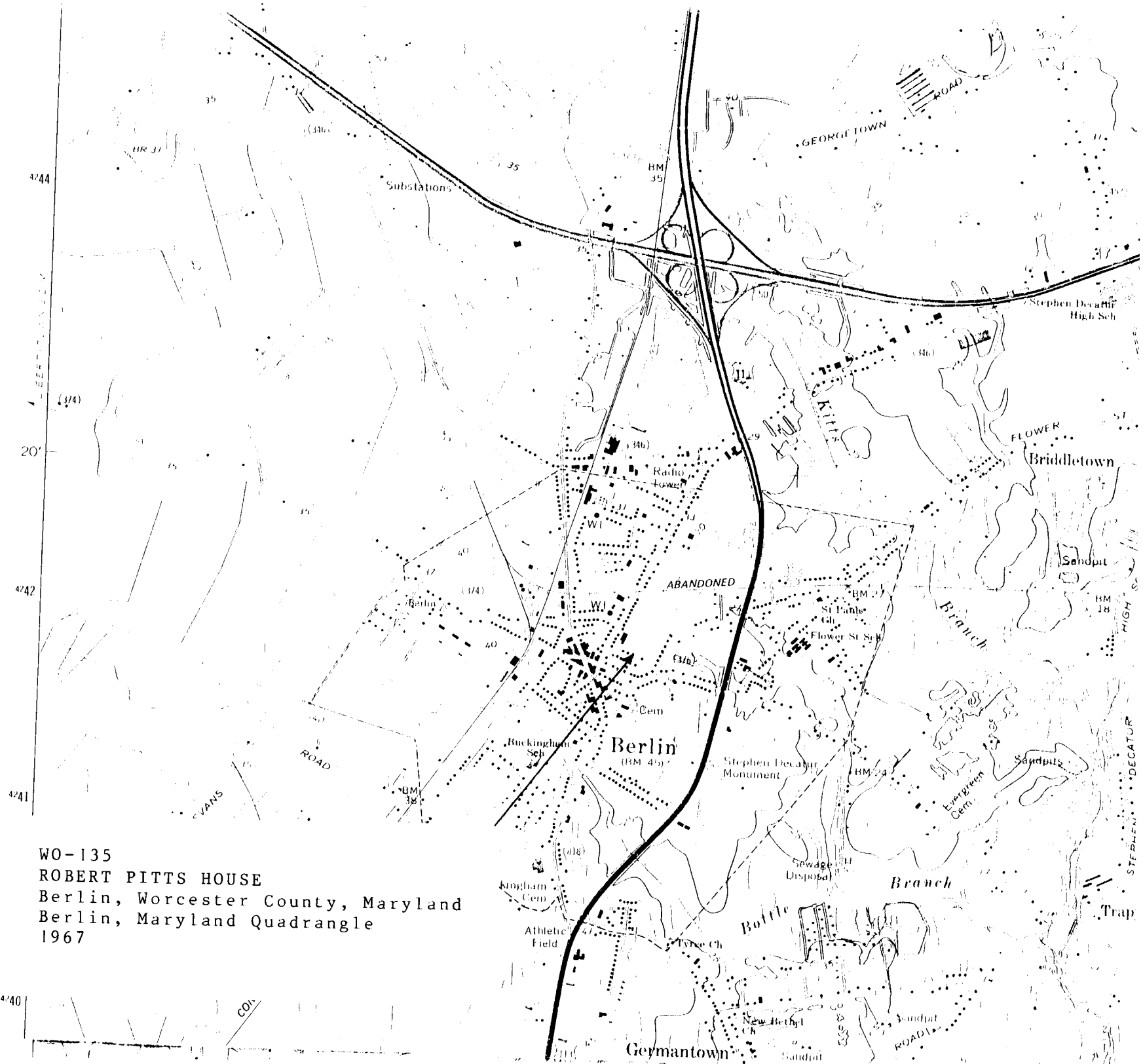
street & number 313 South Main Street telephone 641-0773

city or town	Berlin	state	MD
--------------	--------	-------	----

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438



WO-135
ROBERT PITTS HOUSE
Berlin, Worcester County, Maryland
Berlin, Maryland Quadrangle
1967